

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1302
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5894

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDIP, SP, MX
SUBJECT: DIAZ ORDAZ RESIGNATION TIED TO ECHEVERRIA

1. MADRID PAPERS HAVE CARRIED VARIOUS REPORTS FROM MEXICO TO THE EFFECT THAT RUMORS THERE CLAIM THE RESIGNATION OF MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN DIAZ ORDAZ, OSTENSIBLY FOR REASONS OF EYE PROBLEMS, WAS IN FACT ACHIEVED BY ECHEVERRIA, USING AS A FULCRUM THE SHARPLY CRITICAL REMARKS DIAZ ORDAZ MADE ABOUT ECHEVERRIA SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL HERE.

2. REGARDING THE REPORTS, A TOP MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STAFF TOLD EMBOFF THAT THEY HAD NO IDEA OF WHERE THE TRUTH LAY, ASSERTING THE MINISTRY HAS FIRST HEARD OF DIAZ ORDAZ' DEPARTURE AFTER THE FACT. HE HAD LEFT WITHOUT NOTIFICATION, HE SAID, AND MIGHT WELL NOT RETURN TO SAY GOOD-BYE--FIFTEEN DAYS AFTER PRESENTING HIS CREDENTIALS.

2. TAKING A MORE SYMPATHETIC LINE, A HIGH OFFICIAL IN THE MINISTRY'S LATIN AMERICAN DEPT TOLD EMBOFF THAT MEXICAN FONSEC SANTIAGO ROEL HAD TELEPHONED FONMIN OREJA ABOUT IT, AND THAT THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT ABOUT DIAZ ORDAZ' WELL-KNOWN EYE PROBLEMS. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, SHORTLY BEFORE
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HIS SUDDEN DEPARTURE, DIAZ ORDAZ HAD BEEN VISITED BY A SPANISH RELATIVE (ALSO NAMED DIAZ ORDAZ) WHO HAD SUFFERED FROM THE SAME PROBLEMS AND WAS NOW BLIND. THE MEXICAN AMBASSADOR HAD TRIED TO SEE EMINENT SPANISH OPHTHALMOLOGIST BARRAQUER, BUT THE LATTER WAS ON VACATION: GERMANY WAS SUGGESTED, AND DIAZ ORDAZ TOOK OFF.

4. THE SAME OFFICIAL ADDED THAT THE TWO VERSIONS (EYE PROBLEMS AND ECHEVERRIA) WERE NOT, OF COURSE, MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, AND COULD WELL BOTH BE TRUE. VARIOUS FOREIGN DIPLOMATS HERE TOOK A SIMILAR LINE WITH EMBOFF, NOTING THAT WHILE THE MEXICAN CHARGE WAS STICKING TO THE OFFICIAL (EYE PROBLEMS) VERSION, DIAZ ORDAZ, AS THE AMBASSADOR WOULD NOT HAVE TO RESIGN TO HAVE HIS EYES ATTENDED, BUT COULD SIMPLY TAKE AS LONG A LEAVE AS NEEDED. IN SUM, THE OFFICIAL VERSION HAS OBTAINED VIRTUALLY NO CREDIBILITY HERE AS THE WHOLE STORY, AND WE BELIEVE THAT THE POLITICAL REASONS FOR HIS DEPARTURE ARE THE MORE ACCURATE ONES. STABLER

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